



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 20—26 August 2023

SUNDAY 20 AUGUST	11th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 18: 23-35 • 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
2023 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES - 2023 (A free voluntary program organised by the Church) Lessons take place in the building behind the church and begin at 10.30am until Church dismissal. We have classes for ages ranging from Syrs to teenage years. Lessons are taught in a relaxed, friendly environment. Please bring your children along to learn of their rich Orthodox faith and come close to God and His Love.	
MONDAY 21 AUGUST	• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction • 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
TUESDAY 22 AUGUST	• 5.00pm Vesper Service for Apodisis of the Dormition of the Theotokos
WEDNESDAY 23 AUGUST <i>Apodisis of the Dormition of the Theotokos</i>	• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
THURSDAY 24 AUGUST <i>St Kosmas of Aitola</i>	• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy • 8.00—9.00pm ➡ TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP 2023 ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME Join the group and learn about your faith, make friends, enjoy refreshments, in a friendly, relaxing environment. * In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church
SUNDAY 27 AUGUST	GOSPEL READING: Matthew 19: 16-26 EPISTLE READING: 1Corinthians 15: 1-11

Telephone Contact Numbers

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Fr Athanasios and
Fr Ephraim are available
at the Church every
Monday to Friday
between 4.00 and 6.00pm
for Holy Confession and
any spiritual need.

***On Apodosis of The Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos we commemorate
Panagia tou Harou whose icon is enthroned at our Parish***

Panagia tou Harou is the name of the unique icon which depicts the Virgin Mary cradling the crucified Christ, rather than the Christ child, hence its name (*haros* in Greek means "death").



ST KOSMAS OF AITOLA

Father Kosmas Aitolos was born in 1714 in the Greek village Megalo Dendro (Big Tree) in the region of Aitolia. He studied in Mount Athos, in "Athonias School", and later he became a monk in Philotheou Monastery. Because of the lack of education in most of the population, especially in the remote areas of Greece, Father Kosmas was "forced" to leave Athos and begin missionary tours in the villages with the aim of educating the poor people. This way he would also be able to help people understand the Scriptures better. In a period of six years he managed to establish 250 schools as well as charities and rural churches.

On August 24, 1779 he was executed at Kolkondas, Fier District, near the mouth of the Seman river (in present day Albania) by the Ottoman authorities. There were no formal charges against him.

He was recognized as a saint by the Patriarchate of Constantinople Athenagoras in 1961.

The Teachings of St. Kosmas ~ THE MEANING OF THE CROSS

Learn, my Brethren, what is the meaning of the sign of the Cross. When we put our hand on [our] head, it reveals God who is in the sky. When we put it over [our] navel, it reveals that he descended to earth and became incarnate. When we put [our] hand on the right breast, it reveals that he is just and eternal and that he will place the just on his right hand. And when we put it on [our] left side, it reveals that he will judge all the nations and they will stand on his left side and he will put them into hell.

The holy Cross, my brethren, is the wellspring of the whole earth. The holy Cross blesses the entire world, all that is divine and holy in the churches. The Cross blesses the Divine Liturgy and every service. The Cross blesses the saints. The Cross blesses and strengthens baptism. The Cross blesses couples. The Cross chases away demons who flee like lightning. The Cross is a bright weapon, and whoever makes the sign of the Cross is illuminated and is blessed. It is like a double-edged sword to which the demons don't draw near to urge people to commit sin.

Wherever a person sets out to travel, he should first make the sign of the Cross and say the prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ." Whether you go to the fair or to the field, or to the vineyard, or when you eat bread or fruit, or drink wine or water, when you go to sleep, worship God. Make the sign of the Cross over your body and then lie down to sleep. You will then sleep and will rise in the morning strong and happy. So, my brethren, you have understood and now know.

<https://saintkosmas.org>



11th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 18: 23-35

On Forgiveness

"Jesus said "Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses." (Matthew 18:21-35)

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Often people are struck by the question: how can a man be saved? And we find in this passage of the Gospel, as in a whole number of others, such a simple precise answer to it. Your salvation is in your own hands — forgive: and you will be forgiven. And the moment you are forgiven, it means that eternal life is open to you. In today's Gospel Christ tells us about a man who owed a vast sum of money to his overlord but had no means of repaying and his Lord forgave him all because he had pity on him. After leaving his overlord's presence this man met another who owed him a small amount, and began demanding payment without mercy. Hearing this the overlord said: I forgave you your enormous debt, so how could you not forgive your debtor his small indebtedness? In the same way we expect that through one word of God's mercy, the gates of eternal life will be opened for us, yet we close these very doors — no, the small doors of this temporal life in the face of another person. What can we hope for?

The Gospel says in another place: with what measure you measure it shall be measured unto you; in the Beatitudes it says: blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy, and in the Lord's prayer: forgive us as we forgive... How simple it all seems, and yet how difficult we find it. It would be simple if our hearts responded to sorrow, to need; it is difficult because our hearts are silent. But why is this so? May it not be because when someone behaves badly we always think he must be a bad man, without realising that often the man so much wants to be good, so much wants every word of his to be pure, his thoughts and his heart pure, his actions worthy ones, but he simply has not the strength, he is enmeshed by old habits, by the pressures of his environment, by false shame and so many other things. And he continues to act wrongly; but we could disentangle him. We could look at him as God looks at him, with pity, as one might look at a sick man dying of a disease that could be cured if only he were given the right treatment.

And each one of us could do what is necessary for someone. Look at a man and pity him for being wicked, angry, vengeful, bad in one way or another. Have pity on him and turn the bright side of your soul towards him, tell him that his actions and his words will not deceive you, however wicked they may be, because you know that he is an image, an icon of God, besmirched and disfigured, and yet in him you bow down to God, and love him as a brother. To do this may cost you a great deal, but if you can do it once or twice and see how a person changes because you have faith in him, because you have rested God's hope on him, what a world we should live in — a world of mutual trust. True, we should have to pay for it with our heart's blood, with tears of compassion, with agony of soul, but what joy there would be not only among the angels of God in heaven when they saw a sinner saved, but in our own hearts when we suddenly saw that in response to our compassion and love, a person was filled with the light of eternal life.

Source: Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh